

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 006907

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EPA-04 OES-05 CEQ-01 L-02 AID-05 EB-07

COME-00 AGR-10 RSC-01 /046 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CAR:GBHIGH:AF;

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EPA - MR. LLOYD (DRAFT)

OES/ENP/EN:MR. BURKE (DRAFT)

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R 110012Z JAN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU

UNCLAS STATE 006907

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BF, SENV, ECRE

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SLUDGE MOVING PROJECT

1. PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS ASKED DEPARTMENT FOR ITS VIEWS ON INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF PROPOSAL BY COVENTURE OF FIRM OF RALPH T. HALLER WITH HAYDEN, HARDING AND BUCHANAN TO REMOVE TWO MILLION CUBIC YARDS OF TREATED SLUDGE FROM SLUDGE BEDS AT SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT IN PHILADELPHIA TO CAT ISLAND IN BAHAMAS. OBJECTIVE IS TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH LAND WHERE SLUDGE IS PRESENTLY LOCATED. PROJECT, WHICH WOULD TAKE TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO COMPLETE, CALLS FOR LIQUEFACTION OF SLUDGE AND PUMPING IT INTO TANKERS FOR TRANSPORT TO CAT ISLAND WHERE IT WOULD BE DEPOSITED IN "LAGOONS" TO BE BUILT ON LAND AND DESIGNED TO BE IMPERVIOUS SO AS TO PREVENT SEEPAGE INTO GROUND WATER.

2. CORRESPONDENCE DATED OCTOBER 2, 1974 FROM BAHAMAS AGRICULTURE MINISTRY SIGNED BY MINISTER ANTHONY ROBERTS SHOWS THAT PROJECT HAS APPROVAL OF AGRICULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT MINISTERS.

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PAGE 02 STATE 006907

MENT MINISTERS.

3. SLUDGE IN THIS PROJECT IS NOT RAW SEWAGE. IT HAS BEEN TREATED (DIGESTED) AND IS TWENTY YEARS OLD. IT IS STABLE,

WILL NOT DECAY, AND ALL BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY HAS CEASED. ITS VALUE IS IN PUTTING HUMUS INTO SOIL. HOWEVER, SLUDGE DOES CONTAIN HEAVY METALS, SUCH AS CADMIUM AND ZINC, IN DIFFERENT DEGREES, AND RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE DISAGREE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THESE ARE DANGEROUS OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. FOR THIS REASON THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW IN EPA AS TO USE OF SLUDGE ON LAND. IN GENERAL, IF SEWAGE SLUDGE IS MOVED WITHIN THE U.S. AND HAS FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT, AN ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION WOULD BE REQUIRED UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT. IN CASE OF BAHAMAS PROJECT, ONLY U.S. LEGAL REQUIREMENT IS THAT THERE BE NO SPILLAGE IN U.S. HARBORS, AND EPA HAS SO INFORMED PROJECT MANAGERS.

4. IN DEPARTMENT'S VIEW, BASIC DECISION IS UP TO GCOB, AND APPARENTLY ITS DECISION MAY ALREADY HAVE BEEN MADE. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO VERIFY STATUS OF PROJECT IN GCOB, AND ALSO TO PROVIDE DEPARTMENT WITH EMBASSY VIEWS ON WHETHER OR NOT IT PERCEIVES FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROBLEM FOR USG.

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